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Dr. Gene McFadden Says He Has No Plans for Retirement

Gene McFadden, M.D. has practiced medicine for well over five decades. Ask him if it's time to throw in the towel at 85 years-old and his answer is simple, "No. I'm not planning on retirement now or in the near future," he said. "I enjoy good health and still enjoy practicing medicine."

The Live Well Community Health Center – Waverly, formerly called the Waverly Clinic, is where McFadden practices. In fact, he and four other doctors established the health clinic in the 1980s, before it became a part of the HCA system, and owned and operated by Lafayette Regional Health Center.

Since that time so much has changed. Health care has meshed medicine with technology: Patient charts have evolved from paper to electronic, hospital ERs now employ a system of automation to move patients from triage to discharge and specialists can provide treatment - virtually - through a system called telemedicine (or telehealth).

The clinic that McFadden helped to establish has changed, too. Now owned and operated by the Health Care Collaborative (HCC) of Rural Missouri, the facility takes a medical home approach to patient care. Patients receive primary, dental and behavioral health care services all under one roof.

Through all of these changes, including the clinic's adoption of telehealth to increase access to care, McFadden's approach is still relevant. "His patients, as well as the clinic staff, respect his knowledge and years of experience," said Danielle Lopez, manager of clinical operations. "The staff utilizes his knowledge as a resource."

As for his patients, they've grown older together—many of whom aren't just patients, but friends.

"Dr. McFadden is not only a clinician, but he is a dear friend to his patients," Lopez said. "It's not uncommon, on any given day, for a patient to drop by just so he or she can sit with Dr. McFadden and chat."

When asked what motivates him to keep treating patients, McFadden says it's because he makes a difference. "I feel like I make a difference in the lives of the patients that I see and treat in our rural area," he said. "I believe continuity of care is vital, and I provide that for my patients."

McFadden also realizes a different sort of continuity—one that allows him to treat the same patients that he delivered at what was once the Kelling Hospital in Waverly. "Many of the patients that I see, I brought into the world at Kelling Hospital," he said. "Along with that relationship is a sense of loyalty and empathy."

McFadden stressed that advocating for his patients' health and well-being is also important. "I advocate for my patients and strive to assure that they receive the best medical care that can be offered," he said. "If I feel it is beyond my scope, I refer them to the appropriate specialist. Together, we identify, diagnose and treat the condition."

Live Well, which was recently designated as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), partners with Lafayette Regional Center, Pathways Community Health, Carroll County Memorial Hospital and Fitzgibbon Hospital.

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